All-Ages Carol Sing & Crafts

**Friday, December 6, 7 pm**

Join us in Atherton Hall for this family-friendly event—adults, kids, this party is for everyone! Gather round the piano to sing familiar holiday songs or make an easy holiday craft—or do both! We have song books, craft supplies, and beverages. Please bring a snack to share or just bring yourself for the warmth of gathering in community fun!

AdventUUre

This year, we are taking a new adventure – a journey through the weeks leading up to Christmas – a journey of shedding cynicism, hatred, and fear and adorning our lives and world with goodness, hope, listening, and love. Beginning Dec 1 and each Sunday before Christmas, our advent-urers will carry a new light up to the chancel until the message shines bright.

An advent season is a season of anticipation, of awaiting eagerly something hoped for. In midwinter, when the green dress of earth that fills our lungs with life is tucked away, the nights are longer, and the ground is silent, we wait for the wheel of the year to turn us back to spring. The lighting of candles and hearth fires, garlands of green and hard red berries remind us of the heat in the human heart and at the heart of the world. Celebrations of light remind us of the magic that is possible when our hearts and minds are turned toward creation, growth, and healing, rather than the heartless scramble for wealth, power, and privilege. We see one another’s faces alight with hope in the darkness. For Christians afar and those among us, this season of advent is a season of waiting for the annual celebration of the birthday of Jesus of Nazareth, born so long ago and whose message of love and justice still lives and yet too often remains too deep wintered in the hearts of humans, so each week of Advent becomes a time of hope that the spring of Jesus’s message will come to light more truly.

Each week of advent is a preparation for the celebration of one wondrous child and for the rebirth of love and justice in every heart. Advent is a season of waiting, but not a season of passive waiting. Each week prepares the heart, mind, and life.

### Mid-Year Payment Reminder

As we reach the midpoint of the church fiscal year (Dec 31), are you midway through your pledge payments? You can make a donation online by clicking the Donate Now button on the front page of [www.ccuu.org](http://www.ccuu.org).

To check your contributions-to-date, go to [https://ccuu.breezechms.com/](https://ccuu.breezechms.com/)

- if you have already created an account, log in with your user name & password
- if you have not created an account, click on “Create Account” under Sign In
- Once logged in, click on “My Profile.” Click on ‘Giving’ to view your pledge and contribution history and download it if you want a printed statement. 2019 tax-year statements will be emailed in January.

Thank you for helping us with our mission to actively answer the call for love, compassion, reason, and justice!

### Inside This Edition...

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Minister’s Muse… Would You Like Support in Your Recovery… Lay Ministry Calls…</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>From Your Board President… Chalice House Next Steps…</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>From Our Director of Lifespan Religious Education… Sign Up to Take Home the Traveling Chalice… Guest at Your Table…</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Upcoming Worship Services… All-Church Christmas Pageant… Be Part of Worship…</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>What does it mean to be a People of Awe?</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Emerging Young Adults… 20-30 Somethings… 40-50 Somethings… Transitions… Sing with Choir… Social Action News: Monthly Fair Trade… PADS Meal, Community Renewal Society…</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Journaling Circle… Yoga… AHA Discussion… Buddhist Study Group… Women 60+ Building a Village… Sunday Volunteers Needed… Intro to CCUU… Upcoming Book Discussions… Feminine Divine Women’s Group… Open Form Discussion…</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Church Year Highlights to Come… Our Winter Weather Closing Policy… UU Men’s Retreat… MidAmerica Regional Assembly… UUA General Assembly… Donate to CCUU Anytime… Download Breeze…</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>From the UUA International Office… Outside Groups Held at &amp; Open to CCUU…</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Church Calendar: December into January…</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Focus Deadlines…</strong></td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

You sing your song in your own key, in your own beautiful voice, and the cosmos listens, reverently.

~ Rev. Victoria Safford
Minister’s Muse

This year, the annual Interfaith worship service that takes place at Prince of Peace Lutheran Church in Schaumburg was, again, a lovely event. It was the day after we had moved out of our house into the apartment where we will live temporarily and the same day that we moved the rest of our stuff out of our house into a storage unit. Mark has gone with me every year to that worship service, but this year he was too busy with some odds and ends clearing out at the old house. Our Director of Lifespan Religious Education, Dr. Mary Shields, went with me instead. It was great to have her there. The service is Interfaith and, at the same time, the participants all come from Abrahamic traditions – Jewish, Christian, and Muslim, so I provide a different voice since Unitarian Universalism is not in the same vein. We consider ourselves Universalist in the broadest sense, so I provide a very different voice. In addition, I am the only female clergy person who is present and speaking at the service. I enjoy it tremendously because the voices of the different traditions are quite wise, often humorous as well as serious. The clergy all work hard to find a deeper and socially conscious way of expressing themselves for Thanksgiving. The choir from Beth Tikvah joins the choir at Prince of Peace, and they make a lovely sound singing of Thanksgiving. Prince of Peace has a bell choir that always offers a beautiful piece of music. And there is a wonderful ceremony of breaking bread together, to which each congregation offers a large loaf of bread for all the people there to share – we always bring a large round loaf from the French bakery at the train station in the city. Each year, the local Rabbi’s mother bakes a couple loaves of challah bread shaped like a turkey, which is fun as well as delicious. This year, I was particularly grateful, since Mark could not be with me, to have Mary Shields by my side, tearing the bread and offering it to all who came. The over 100 people who are present always crowd around the mini small tables enjoying the diverse breads and smiling at one another. The service always closes with our singing Pat Humphrey’s song Peace, Shalom, Salaam.

At first, I thought it would be crazy to participate in the service this year with our move happening on the very same day, but I knew that if I didn’t participate, not only would I feel that I had not represented us when I wanted to, but I knew that I would be too focused on the move and not enough on our larger connections. It turned out that between being there, enjoying the service itself, and being able to share that experience with Mary, I was even more grateful that I had made the decision to go ahead and participate. Of course, there was the added pleasure of at least six or seven varieties of pie served in abundance afterward in their fellowship hall, allowing people to mingle with folks in the area from other religious traditions. Sometimes I think there are people who come just for the pie… but I’m not sure. Admittedly, few people from our congregation attend the service, and I wish there were more. It’s a busy time of year, and I know it can be hard to step out of one’s groove when I’m getting ready for family. What I have observed for myself, as I have participated in this service for four or five years now, is that stepping outside of my routine, participating in the larger community, and building bridges is so energizing and satisfying that I’m glad that I participate each time, and I hope that more of you will too.

Meanwhile, we are now tucked into our temporary digs – the one-bedroom apartment where we will stay until we find a new home. I need to say a special thanks to Ellen Vinzani, co-chair of our care ministry team, who reached out to people to help us with packing and unpacking during this phase of our move. I don’t know how we would’ve done it without her help and the help of the people who stepped in. It made the move manageable and, at times, a downright pleasure.

I look forward to the upcoming holiday season, and to seeing you at the Carol Sing, at the pageant, at the Solstice Service, on Christmas Eve, and of course, for the greens and beans New Year’s service on Dec 29. These are all high points and punctuations to the cycle of the year. They bring us closer as a community and lighten and warm our hearts, even when the nights are longer and the weather is colder.

Are you in Recovery? Would You Like Support in Your Recovery?

We are beginning a recovery support group for those in our congregation. This group will be strictly confidential and will meet regularly and off-site to promote confidentiality. As the numbers grow, the number of meetings will increase. If you have had long term sobriety, please consider adding this group to your list of support groups and support others in their recovery. Alcohol recovery support programs do not guarantee success, however, they have been found to reinforce recovery for a significant number of people, and we want to bring this support to our congregation in a form manageable for non-theistic or agnostic persons. If you are interested in participating, please contact Rev. Hilarie, minister@ccuu.org or 847-359-8440 ext 2, as soon as possible, as our meeting off-site will require a reservation. Initially the group will meet at 5:30 - 7 pm every other Thursday of the month.

Lay Ministry Calls

Each year, the Lay Ministry attempts to contact all members of Countryside in an effort to “stay in touch” with as many people as possible. We want to check in with you and hope you will take advantage of this opportunity to speak with a lay minister. Of course, we are available at any time if you need to get in touch with us. Over the next couple of months, we look forward to having a conversation with you.


Let me keep my mind on what matters, which is my work, which is mostly standing still and learning to be astonished.

~ Mary Oliver
From Your Board President

I’m writing this column the day after our Thanksgiving service which, for me, was a really moving way to start off this holiday week: child dedications, glorious music (complete with the children’s choir), Guest At Your Table boxes, and an important conversation about the myths and truths behind the “Thanksgiving Story” so many of us learned as children. My college-aged daughter and I had just had a discussion about how she feels the history classes she had in kindergarten through 12th grade never taught her the "true story." So following the worship service, I commented to her, “At least you got the real story at church this morning.” Capped off by a fantastic Fair Trade Fair (many thanks to our volunteers who organized and publicized it!!), it was a special day!

Thanks also to the Transitions and Feminine Divine groups for hosting our November potluck - your organization and hospitality are appreciated! While there is not an official potluck in December, Hilary and Mark will be serving their traditional Beans and Greens on December 29 after worship, so be sure to mark your calendar.

At our November Board meeting, we enjoyed a dialogue with our new Lifespan Religious Education Director, Mary Shelden. We spent some time getting to know each other better and heard from Mary about her plans and vision for our RE program. We were all excited about what she shared with us and feel so fortunate to have someone with her talents and passion as part of our church family! I encourage you to find a time to reach out to Mary to welcome her and find out more about her when you have a chance.

Another highlight of our meeting was a presentation from the co-chairs of the Chalice House team, Christine Organ and Laura Mandell, along with a detailed financial report from Robin Reali, who has volunteered to share his financial analyst skills with the team. As communicated at our last town hall meeting on November 10, the overwhelming positive response we have received from several churches from a fairly wide geographic area (along with significant monetary pledges in support of the project), have led to the finding that we should be able to adequately cover the part of our own church budget that comes from the rental income of the house on the North Property, projecting through at least the first 2 years with an immigrant family/families. As we have emphasized before, Countryside absolutely does not have to put ourselves in financial peril through pursuing this mission — if it were ever to come to that point, we could arrange a graceful and responsible exit from our arrangement with ICDI and find another renter for the house (which will be in better shape after using the grant money we received for home improvements). Thanks to the hard work of our Chalice House team and its co-chairs, and the positive responses we have received from other faith organizations, we are getting close to making a decision about whether to move from the stage of information gathering and seeking community partners to the next stage of proceeding with getting the house ready for a family - so, as always, please feel free to seek out a Board member to share your thoughts if you have not done so already. I am grateful to Christine and Laura for the thoughtful pace and thoroughness they have demonstrated to guide our congregation through the exploration of this opportunity. In the spirit of our theme for December, I am in “awe” of you!

As always, feel free to contact me at prez@ccuu.org.

...DuRee

Chalice House Next Steps

After several months of exploration, discussion and fundraising, the Chalice House team has concluded that there is widespread support for the idea of turning Countryside’s home on the north side of our property into transitional housing for immigrants seeking asylum. The project is a joint project with our service partner Interfaith Community for Detained Immigrants (ICDI) in which Countryside and community partners will provide housing while ICDI will provide social services.

Exploration: The team has done its best to fully explore the ramifications of this change including zoning, legal, home repairs, hospitality, long-term planning, and most importantly financial.

Discussion: We have had a chance to talk with many of you through Town Hall meetings, Chalice Team meetings, and other small group meetings. Lots of good questions have been raised and, we hope, addressed

Funding: The financial team, with leadership and oversight by Treasurer Marcus White, reviewed the financial needs and outlook for the first two years of the project, through Fiscal Year 2021. Taking into account funds raised at the Time and Talent Auction and the commitments already made by several community organizations, we are feeling confident that we have enough donor commitments to replace the rental income in our annual budget, and we believe that our estimates are conservative.

It’s important to note that this change is not permanent. Assuming we move forward, we will be committed for a period of 6 months to two years, at which time we can revisit the situation and consider returning the property to a rental home.

At this point, we have recommended to the Board of Trustees that we move ahead with the following timeline:

- Appropriate notice given to the current tenants by the end of the year. (The tenants are already aware this project is under consideration.)
- Working meeting for the Chalice House team/sub-teems on January 12
- Home ready for new occupants in 2nd Quarter 2020

We hope that by now your questions about this project have been addressed and answered, but if you have any additional thoughts feel free to contact chairs Christine Organ and Laura Mandell by emailing ChaliceHouse@ccuu.org

Subteams will begin actively planning for the transition on January 12; new team members are welcome to join us!
Bring Your Spiritual Community Home with You!

**Sign Up to Take Home Our Traveling Chalice**

The chalice travels from Sunday to Sunday -- pick up the chalice case from the church library (on an upper shelf just inside the door to the left) following church on one Sunday, then return it to that same shelf prior to worship the following Sunday. The idea behind the traveling chalice is simply that it assist you in making reflection and/or worship a part of daily life during the week, as well as at church on Sundays. Sign up for your turn here -- and don't be shy! This communal gift only works when folks are ready to receive it, so sign up to take your turn as soon as it works for you - - thanks! (Questions? DLRE@ccuu.org)

Guest at Your Table

**Women Leaders, Strong Communities**

Guest at Your Table (GAYT) is UUSC’s annual intergenerational program to raise support for and awareness about critical human rights issues. Since UUSC’s founding, their work has been shaped and sustained by women’s leadership. Today, they partner with women leaders who are increasing representation for women in their communities, while strengthening access to justice for all. During this year’s Guest at Your Table program, you can learn more about women leaders from UUSC partner organizations who are taking on some of today’s greatest human rights challenges. Donations to Guest at Your Table help UUSC and their partners respond to extraordinary human rights challenges of today, address root causes of injustice, and build capacity to respond to future crises. UUSC is a 79-year-old human rights organization grounded in Unitarian Universalist values and founded to support refugees and political dissidents fleeing Nazi Germany. Through research, advocacy, and partnerships with innovative grassroots organizations, UUSC advances human rights in the United States and around the globe.

Contributions of any amount qualify for UUSC membership. Contributions of $125 or more are eligible to be matched dollar-for-dollar by the UU Congregation of Shelter Rock in Manhasset, NY.


From Our Director of Lifespan Religious Education

Our townhouse is an end unit. The rows in our complex are laid out like spokes of a great wheel, and we are furthest from the hub, at the tire edge, where the tire is a wee wilderness, a grove of trees on a hillside that joins together some woodlands at either end. On one side between the spokes, the garages and balconies line up to face one another, and on the other side there is managed greenspace – and here we are daily blessed by the wonders of nature. The other day as I sat typing in the living room in my big recliner, Margie called out to me from the garden-level studio in her quiet way, “There’s a deer in the front yard!” I rose with some stealth from my chair and crept to the window to see a mature doe helping herself to the crabapples on the lower branches of our tree. She stood there for some time, pulling and munching, her face turned toward us as she ate her fill. Likely she couldn’t see us, I above her a half story and Margie below her – likely the light reflected off the windows – but often it felt like her eyes were on us, feeling our eyes on her, even if she couldn’t see us, or maybe sensing the thrill in our hearts. She was closer to each of us than we were to one another, and we couldn’t see each other either, but we felt the thrill in each other’s hearts – the sense of awe and gratitude – as we shared this beautiful, peaceful moment, before she walked on into the grove.

I remember reading the Bible as a young woman, wondering at how the prophets were always having to come up with yet another miracle, thinking, how are the miracles always all around us not enough? By then I had learned a singular wonder of womanhood: that the eggs we came from were born with our mothers, and that we were also born with all the eggs we would ever produce, so that the seeds of our daughters were born with us, as the seeds of their daughters would be born with them, like so many Matryoshka dolls. Or rather, perhaps, they are like us. I had witnessed by then the miracle of childbirth, but couldn’t know yet the miracle of my own daughter to come, and how my love of her would stretch my heart to make room for all the things I would need to learn. The fact that sometimes our daughters come to us from the seeds of others, that they stretch our hearts even when they haven’t stretched our bodies, just adds an extravagant layer to this miracle. Love itself is always its own miracle, to be held in awe and gratitude. Lately, as I return to the land of my childhood, I have been astonished at how the love I had for the people I left behind is still there in me, waiting for the next opportunity to find utterance. The slightest touch opens the portal. Asking why this love is still there is as needless as asking why it surprises me – it simply is, beyond reasonableness. It passes understanding.

As we turn from the month of Attention to the month of Awe, may we, with Mary Oliver, stand still and learn to be astonished. May we see the red berries on the lower branches, and taste their deliciousness as we pull them from the tree. May it be so, salaam and shalom, blessed be, amen.

...Mary
Upcoming Worship Services

Worship Services & Religious Education Classes are on Sundays at 10:00 am.
NOTE: Announcements begin 5 minutes prior to the start of the worship service.
Worship descriptions are also on the church website: [http://ccuu.org/services/](http://ccuu.org/services/)

Dec 8  Holding the Center—Reverence & the Gravity of Things  Rev. Hilary L. Krivchenia
Young people begin in the Sanctuary with their families and will be sung out to their religious education classes.
Joining Sunday: We will welcome our newest members during this service.

Dec 15  All-Church Christmas Pageant  Rev. Hilary L. Krivchenia
This is an All-Church Service; young people attend worship with their families.
Our annual Christmas Pageant is a sing-along Living Nativity Story, and the entire congregation has a part! See details below…
Share the Plate: we will donate half the cash collected in the offering to the Association for UU Music Ministries (formerly called UU Musicians Network), whose mission is to nurture, educate, and inspire UU music leaders to create dynamic and transformative music ministries. It is the professional association that supports our musicians through continuing education, professional guidance, collegial networks, publication of useful materials, and grants or scholarships to attend its annual conference.

Dec 22, 10 am  The Awesome Dark  Rev. Hilary L. Krivchenia
Young people begin in the Sanctuary with their families and will be sung out to their religious education classes.

Dec 22, 4 pm  Winter Solstice Service
Join us for our annual Yule celebration which includes candlelight, music, readings, and a spiral of greens. Stay after the service for hot beverages and fellowship.

Dec 24, 4:30 pm  Christmas Eve Sunset Candlelight Service: Lantern Light of New Birth
Join us for Christmas reflections, lovely choral music, beloved hymns, and the magic of candlelight.
This is an all-church service; all young people, including infants and toddlers, attend the service with their families.
Our Christmas Eve Offering will be donated to the Minister’s Discretionary Fund, which is used to help those in need within our congregation.

Dec 29, 10 am  Compassion Past, Present, and Future  Rev. Hilary L. Krivchenia
This is a 5th Sunday, so our young people have Faith in Action service learning; please begin in your classrooms.
Following the service, the Krivchenias will provide a lunch of greens and beans and rice to wish health and wealth in the coming year; feel free to bring nonalcoholic beverages, bread or crackers, or other additions for the meal.

Jan 5, 10 am  Pulpit Guest to be announced
Young people begin in the Sanctuary with their families and will be sung out to their religious education classes.

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All-Church Christmas Pageant: Dec 15, 10 am

On December 15, during our worship service, we will hold our annual Christmas Pageant, which is a sing-along Living Nativity Story, and the entire congregation has a part! We have several parts from which you can choose:

- Donkey- Wear gray clothes
- Cow- Wear brown or black clothes
- Sheep- White clothes (wool or fluffy accents)
- Angel- Wear white clothes
- Townsperson- Wear simple clothes to match time theme of nativity story
- Shepherd- Wear loose flowing simple clothes with sash for waist and/or head dressing

Feel free to be as creative or extravagant as you wish with your costumes. Special guests are welcome (examples may be: dinosaurs, princesses, super heroes, etc.) The morning of the pageant, we will have costumes from which children and youth can choose, and there will be simple animal masks, tails, halos, and misc. items available to add to your costume if you need them. Feel free to bring any extra costume items to share if you have them.

This year, we will divide the narration among those young people who are interested in reading. If your child would like to read part of the narration, please sign up online: [https://www.signupgenius.com/go/70a044ea4a72fa13-christmas](https://www.signupgenius.com/go/70a044ea4a72fa13-christmas)

Be Part of Worship

Light the Chalice and/or Sponsor Worship Flowers
You can do both at the same service or split them. You can sign up more than once/year. When you light the chalice -- as an individual, couple, family, friends, you will receive the words to speak days before the service or you can choose to simply light the chalice without speaking, as the minister or someone else reads -- your choice. When you sponsor flowers for the service, you can dedicate them in honor or memory of a person or an occasion. Sign up online: [https://www.signupgenius.com/go/70a044ea4a72fa13-worship](https://www.signupgenius.com/go/70a044ea4a72fa13-worship)
The path of awe seems well worn. It’s a journey intended to bring us down to size. Pictures of our galaxy with a note that there are 100 billion more just like it. Videos of deep-sea creatures with bioluminescent bodies. Images of the northern lights that are utterly otherworldly. All of them remind us that the universe is more vast than we can imagine. All of them leave us with a sense of wonder that overwhims. We are brought to the edge of what we can wrap our minds around. It’s like staring into an incomprehensible abyss. One can’t help but feel humbled and small.

But religion has never wanted us to stop there. Hold tight it says. I know it’s hard but trust us: the path doesn’t end with a deep darkness that doesn’t care. Just stand at the abyss a bit longer. Lean in just a little bit more. And when you do so, suddenly an invitation emerges from that awe-full abyss. You look into the vast mystery and surprisingly, it stares back, as if to say, “Welcome home.”

As physicists tell us, contemplation of the vast universe doesn’t make them feel smaller, it makes them realize the larger story of which they are a part. We are stardust, as they say. From the vastness we came and to it we will return again. In other words, to be a people of awe is not so much about feeling small; it’s about feeling connected.

And not just connected to the stars, but also to each other. Awe reduces our size in order to make room for something more than our personal needs, wants and worries. With our narcissism shrunk down to a reasonable proportion, it becomes possible to notice that we are not the only ones up there on the stage. It’s in this way that looking up into the cosmos allows us to look across at each other. And it’s a huge gift, because while being center stage and center of the universe can feel powerful, it’s also a very lonely place to stand.

So friends, don’t just look up at the stars this month. Let that looking up also lead to you looking across. And in doing so, may you - like our friend G.K. Chesterton - not simply be astonished at the universe but also feel at home in it.

Questions for Considering Awe
As always, don’t treat these questions like “homework” or try to answer every single one. Instead, make time to meditate on the list and then pick the one question that speaks to you most. The goal is to figure out which question is “yours.” Which question captures the call of your inner voice? Which one contains “your work”? And what is that question trying to get you to notice or acknowledge? And don’t forget, often it helps to read the list to a friend or loved one and ask them which one they think is the question you need to wrestle with!

1. Who taught you the most about “living in awe”?
2. Has age impeded or assisted awe for you?
3. How as the location of awe changed for you over time? Has it shifted from the stars to the woods? From the birth of planets to the birth of your child?
4. From the physical feats your body allows to the stowed wrinkles of your hand? What now leaves you most in awe when you look at it?
5. Have you ever turned to the stars for support? Comfort? Escape? Connection?
6. Is awe calling you to feel smaller or bigger?
7. Have you ever sat in the middle of nature and it suddenly came to life? What gift did that experience leave you with?
8. Is it possible that awe is where God is found?
9. Do you most often complain about your body or stand in awe of it?
10. When was the last time you stood in awe of your life partner?
11. When was the last time you stood in awe of your child?
12. Can you imagine someone standing in awe of you?

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Our Soul Connections small ministry groups discuss the monthly themes, questions, and activities each month. For further info regarding the Soul Connections program, go to http://ccuu.org/soulconnections/

~ Rev. Kathleen McTigue
Emerging Young Adults Group
2nd & 4th Sundays, 6 pm
Those who are 18-30 years of age, whether newly out of school or attending college or working, are invited to join us in classroom 4 on the 2nd & 4th Sundays of the month for conversation and community.

20-30 Somethings
1st Sundays, 11:20 am
If you are in your 20s or 30s, please join us on the 1st Sundays of the month after worship in classroom 4. Childcare is available during our meetings. We also plan service projects and social outings for other times during the month. For more info or to be added to our email list, email 2030s@ccuu.org.

40-50 Somethings
Games Night: Dec 7, 7:30 pm
The ages included in the title of our group are not intended to be restrictive; all are welcome to join us!
We will hold a Games Night on Sat, Dec 7 at 7:30 pm in Atherton Hall. Are all welcome to join us! If you wish, bring a game and/or snack to share. If you have an idea for an activity for the group, email 4050s@ccuu.org. To join our email list, go to http://ccuu.org/mailman/listinfo/4050slist_ccuu.org.

Social Action News
Monthly Fair Trade Sale: Dec 15
Once/month, we offer fair trade chocolate, coffee, tea, cocoa, olive oil, and snacks for sale during our coffee-fellowship time. For each pound of Equal Exchange food purchased, 20 cents goes to the UUSC’s Small Farmer Fund, https://www.uusc.org/uusc-fair-trade-project/.

Monthly PADS Meal: Mon Dec 23
Our congregation is responsible for providing dinner for the PADS shelter at Presbyterian Church of Palatine on the 4th Wednesday of the month, October through April. If you would like to provide part of this month’s meal, please sign up online, https://www.signupgenius.com/go/70a044ea4a72fa13-december3. Please note that due to the Christmas holiday, our meal will be delivered to Presbyterian Church of Palatine on Monday, Dec 23. If you have questions, contact Leslie Luther, bauwdirector@gmail.com or 847-702-4717.

After Beloved Conversations…
A Next Step Forward
Many of us participated in the “Beloved Conversations” program, which helped us to look within and to acknowledge our own racial biases. We pondered how to turn this realization into action. Toward that end, in September, our CCUU Board of Trustees voted unanimously for our congregation to become a member of the Community Renewal Society (CRS). CRS is a faith-based organization which since 1982 has worked to eliminate race and class barriers throughout Illinois. UUs have a strong presence, with seven other UU congregations being CRS members.

Our congregation belongs to the NW Suburban Cluster of CRS, and as such will periodically meet with other area member churches to further CRS’s legislative platform. As we deepen our understanding, we may want to participate in CRS’s Annual Membership Assembly in October, its Legislative Day in Springfield every spring, and its annual assembly on MLK Jr’s birthday in January. We are provided with an ongoing network and with training. We will be well supported as we work for racial justice. Interested in discovering what CRS is all about? We are invited to the next NW Suburban Cluster meeting to be held on

   Saturday, December 7, 9-11 am
   Southminster Presbyterian Church
   916 Central Road, Arlington Heights
   Please let me know if you plan to attend.

   Yvette Johnson, Facilitator
   Yjohnson3145@comcast.net

Transitions
Our mission is to provide a forum for adults to explore life transitions with a supportive community during daytime hours.

Monthly Program & Lunch: Dec 19, 10 am
Please Note: We are meeting on the 3rd Thursday this month to accommodate the holidays; we’ll return to 4th Thursdays in January.

On Thursday, December 19, Lutheran Home will provide us breakfast at 10 AM. This will be followed by a Program on Alzheimer Disease - scope, diagnosis, support, and up-to-date research, including genetics. Post program, we will continue our discussion and ask that attendees bring their favorite Christmas cookies to share in the holiday spirit. All are welcome; invite a friend!

Transitions

Sing with Choir
Do you enjoy singing? Then perhaps you would enjoy singing with our choir. We rehearse on Thursday evenings at 7:15-9:15. Just come on in. We’ll be saving a seat for you! Childcare is provided during rehearsals. For more info, contact Alison Vernon, 847-359-8440 ext. 5 or Music.Director@ccuu.org.

Children & Youth Choirs
Young people in 1st thru 8th grades are invited to meet in the Music Rehearsal Room after Sunday School, about 11:15, for a 20-minute fun rehearsal. For more info, contact Alison Vernon.
Journaling Circle ~ Dec 5, 10 am
Writing Together for Self-Discovery
We gather on the 1st Thursday of each month. Each gathering opens with a short meditation. We then free-write and write from prompts related to our monthly themes. Through sharing our writings, we also share life’s journey and deepen relationships within our community. Bring a notebook/journal, a pen, & your desire for personal exploration and growth.

Atheist, Humanist, Agnostic (AHA) Discussion ~ 2nd Tuesdays, 7 pm
All are welcome to join us in classroom 4 on Dec 10, we will watch & discuss another couple of installments of the Atheist Tapes. It will feature two prominent atheists that will be interviewed for a half hour each.

Attractive Divine Women’s Group
Last Saturdays, 9:30 am
We meet in classroom 6. We are currently discussing Almost Everything: Notes On Hope by Anne Lamott.

Open Forum Discussion
Sundays, 9-9:50 am
Please join us in classroom 5 to discuss “the issues of the day” while respectfully welcoming different perspectives. Email vidaxel@axeldesigns.com for more info and/or to join the Forum email list. Upcoming topics and some gently recommended (never required) material are listed below. Future topics are tentative; the ones scheduled for the upcoming two Sundays are the least likely to change, but current events developments, or other factors, sometimes inspire us to switch, late.

- Dec 8: Crime in Space
- Dec 15: CRISPR and Replacement Organs
- Dec 22: Current events topic, to be announced
- Dec 29: How might we use social media without de-moralizing ourselves?
- Jan 5: Bias in News Media, rated and explored
- Jan 12: Discussion of a Recent Current Events Topic.

Women 60+ Building a Village
2nd Thursdays, 10 am
Countryside is offering women 60 years and older a place where we can build our own village. We are reading and discussing Women Rowing North by Mary Pipher. This book is about older women and their challenges and the tools needed to overcome them. In short, this book is about women, who, in their unique ways, build themselves a personal village.

Please join us on the second Thursday of each month from 10-11:30am. Susan Auld and Jeanmarie Dwyer co-facilitate our discussions. Feel free to bring a beverage.

Yoga ~ 1st & 3rd Thursdays, 6-7 pm
Join us in the Spirit Play Room (rm 9/10) for this all-levels class, which focuses on stretches and poses that calm the mind while increasing balance, range of motion, and core strength.

Buddhist Study Group
2nd Sundays, 11:30 am
All are welcome to join us as we discuss selected Buddhist texts and try to apply the principles and techniques to our everyday lives. We practice mindful breathing, walking meditation, stress management, and cultivate the capacities to be kind and compassionate and to bring joy into our lives.

Intro to CCUU
1st Sundays, 11 am
Newcomers are invited to attend a brief orientation to Countryside Church and Unitarian Universalism any 1st Sunday of the month following worship.
If you’ve already attended an Intro session, you might plan to attend Path to Belonging on Feb 9 & 16 or May 31 & June 7.

Upcoming Book Discussions
Book Circle: January 19
All are welcome to join us to discuss How to Change Your Mind: What the New Science of Psychedelics Teaches Us About Consciousness, Dying, Addiction, Depression, and Transcendence by Michael Pollan. We gather at 6:15 pm in classroom 6, discussion begins at 6:30 pm.—please join us!

Last Mondays Book Group: Jan 27
We will not meet this month. All are invited to join us on Jan 27 at 7 pm in the Stokes Room to discuss The Overstory by Richard Powers.

How to Find CCUU Sign-up Lists
Click on the ‘Opportunities to Serve’ icon on the front page of ccuu.org, which takes you to SignUpGenius, where you will be asked to provide the sign up creator’s email—ccuu@ccuu.org, then select a sign-up.

Sunday Volunteers Needed
Please sign up to greet, usher, and help with AV - http://www.signupgenius.com/go/70a044a4a72fa13-sunday. Contact the church office with questions. Thank you!
Church Year Highlights to Come

**Mark Your Calendar**

**December ~ Theme: Awe**
- 15 All-Church C'mas Pageant
- 22 Winter Solstice Service @4
- 24 Cmas Eve Candlelight Service @4:30

**January ~ Theme: Integrity**
- 11 Book Drive & Volunteering at Bernie’s Book Bank
- 19 All-Church MLK Service followed by monthly potluck lunch

**February ~ Theme: Resilience**
- Annual Stewardship Drive
- 2 Souper Bowl??
- 9 ChocolateFest potluck during Coffee hour??
- 16 All-Church Sr High Service

**March ~ Theme: Wisdom**
- 7 Music with a Mission
- 14 Pi Day Party
- 15 Monthly Potluck after worship

**April ~ Theme: Liberation**
- 10 Passover Seder
- 12 Easter
- 18 Selfie Scavenger Hunt
- 18 MidAmerica UU Regional Assembly in Rockford
- 19 All-Church Earth Day service & Potluck
- 26 Western Crescent Choral Fest at CCUU

**May ~ Theme: Thresholds**
- 16 Kindness Rock Geocaching Hunt
- 17 Congregational Annual Meeting

**June ~ Theme: Play**
- 7 All-Church Flower Communion, Family Fun Day & Congregational Potluck
- 14 Pride Service
- 21 Summer Solstice Service
- 24-28: UU General Assembly in Providence RI

Our Winter Weather Closing Policy

Since we’ve already had our first snow, let’s take this time to remind you that if the decision is made to close the church, we will publicize the decision:
- on the church website,
- on the church Facebook page,
- on the Congregational Administrator’s voicemail message (847-359-8440 ext 1), and
- with the Emergency Closing Center (which publicizes on the local TV and radio stations).

Guidelines considered when making the decision: If the wind chill in the greater Chicago area is colder than 40 degrees below zero or if a weather emergency has been issued because of snow or wind, we will cancel all church events, including any committee meetings, office hours, Sunday morning religious education, and Sunday worship.


CCUU puts a high priority on the safety of staff, members, and guests. Although the church may remain open, individuals may find that their local conditions make it unsafe for them to travel. **When in doubt, please stay home!**

UU Men’s Retreat

**Jan 24-26, 2020**

All men are welcome to join those from Unity Temple UUC, Unitarian Church of Evanston, and DuPage UU Church at Cabrini Retreat Center in Des Plaines for a retreat on the theme of *Connection with Self and Other Men*. More details and information about how to register can be found on the form on the bulletin board across from the church office.

MidAmerica Regional Assembly

**Sat, April 18 at UU Church of Rockford IL**

Please save the date for our upcoming, Regional Assembly (RA). Our keynote speaker will be Taquiena Boston, Special Advisor to the UUA President for Institutional Inclusion, Equity, and Change. The day will feature worship, the annual business meeting, lunch, keynote presentation, and select workshops. On Friday evening, April 17, the UU Church in Rockford will graciously host an evening gathering for those in town.

General Assembly 2020

**June 24-28, Providence, RI**

**Rooted, Inspired, Ready**

General Assembly (GA) is the annual meeting of our Unitarian Universalist Association (UUA). Attendees worship, witness, learn, connect, and make policy for the Association through democratic process. Anyone may attend.

Early Bird Registration is now open through March 15; new this year: a monthly installment plan to pay for your registration. Housing Reservations will open March 2. For more info, go to [https://www.uua.org/ga](https://www.uua.org/ga).

Donate to CCUU Anytime

You can donate anytime toward your operating pledge or for our share-the-plate organizations, even if you are unable to attend the Sunday service. Use the ‘donate now’ button on the front page of our website, www.ccuu.org, or text ‘X SHARE’ to 847-973-7344 with X being the amount you would like to contribute to share the plate. In the same manner, you can donate toward your pledge—use the ‘donate now’ button on the front page of the website or text ‘X PLEDGE’ to 847-973-7344 with X being the amount you want applied to your pledge.

Have a Smart Phone or Tablet?

Download the free Breeze CHMS (church management system) app! Once downloaded, the church ID is CCUU. Check your giving and access the church directory right from your phone.
From the UUA International Office

All In For Climate Justice: People, Power, Planet ~ April 10-13, 2020

The UU United Nations Office invites participants age 14+ to gather in New York City for their 2020 Intergenerational Spring Seminar. It will include workshops, worship, panels, creative activities, and more. Programming will equip participants with the skills and information to get involved with local organizing for climate justice and make change to move us toward a more just, equitable, and sustainable world. Attendees will be inspired to reflect on how the topics addressed affect them in their lives, their spirituality, and how they are called to respond. Registration opens Dec 2. For more info and to register, go to https://www.uua.org/international-justice/un/spring-seminar

Por La Vida: Solidarity with Women in Honduras—March 5 - 11, 2020

Join the Unitarian Universalist College of Social Justice (UUCSJ) for a journey of accompaniment and solidarity in Honduras with their partner, Foro de Mujeres Por la Vida. They particularly invite feminists, immigrant rights organizers, and religious leaders. This partnership and journey grew from UUCSJ’s commitment to Central American migrant justice and connects with key human rights partners in Honduras. UUCSJ is inspired by the unique way feminist groups come together to vision and fight for a more just future. This journey is designed to deepen participants’ understanding of feminist leadership and vision, strengthen solidarity with Honduran partners, awaken participants to some of the root causes of migration, and prepare participants for advocacy and accompaniment when they return home. Register by January 6, 2020 with UUCSJ: https://uucsj.org/honduras-por-la-vida/

UU Partner Church Council Public Trips

Many opportunities to connect with the global UU story.

- **ROOTS Pilgrimage: Transylvania July 2020.** The UU Partner Church Council (UUPCC) still has spots available in their ROOTS Pilgrimage to Transylvania (July 13-20, 2020). This pilgrimage provides a unique opportunity for both laity and clergy from Unitarian churches in Transylvania and North American UUs to explore our shared religious heritage along with our distinctive spiritual, cultural and theological beliefs, values and traditions. Through presentations, panel discussions, small group conversations and shared spiritual practices, participants will explore large spiritual themes.

- **Thanksgiving Pilgrimage:** Transylvania September 2020. The UUCC will also offer their annual Thanksgiving Pilgrimage to Transylvania in late September 2020. Thanksgiving is one of the four most significant celebrations for our Transylvanian Unitarian kinfolk. Registration will open around December 1.

- **Looking ahead,** UUCC will offer their first-ever trip to visit English Unitarians in February 2021 and a trip to share in the annual Anniversary celebration of the Unitarian Union of NE India in September 2021. For more info and to register, go to the UUCC website: https://uupcc.org/pilgrimages/pilgrimage-opportunities

Outside Groups Held at & Open to CCUU

Several outside groups use space at Countryside Church UU and are in alignment with our UU Principles and open to participation by all. There may be a participation fee or other requirements set by the group and which apply to all participants, regardless of CCUU affiliation.

- **Wellness House Hypnosis Group & Reiki Sessions** are held here at CCUU the 1st Saturday of the month, these offerings are open to anyone in our area who has or had cancer of any kind. Free and registration is required; call 630-654-5197 or email kmitchell@wellnesshouse.org.

- **Great Plains Zen Center (GPZC)** sits meditation on Sundays at 7 pm and offers monthly Intro to Zen workshops. For more info about GPZC’s programs, refer to “Other Religious Voices” bulletin board across from the church office or go to www.greatplainssenzen.org.

- **Transcend** is a program of Youth Outlook which meets here every Wednesday evening. It is a support group focusing on gender identity and is geared towards Trans youth. It is suggested for 14-20 yr olds. For more info, go to www.youth-outlook.org or talk to CCUU member Kim Tiford.

- **Citizens’ Climate Lobby, Chicago Northwest Suburbs Chapter** meets here 2nd Saturdays. For info, go to https://citizensclimatelobby.org/chapters/IL_Chicago_Northwest_Suburbs/

- **Journey Transgender Support Group** is for anyone transgender, gender queer, androgynous, or gender questioning; meets the 2nd and 4th Sundays at 2:30 pm in classroom 5. Meetings are limited to people 18 or over, unless accompanied by a parent. transgender_journey-subscribe@yahoo.com

- **Agape: A Community of New Hope** holds worship in our Sanctuary on Saturday evenings. We are happy to help an emerging faith community that, although a different denomination, is welcoming of all and aligns with UUsism on social justice issues.

- **AA:** Men’s Meeting: Saturdays, 9-10 am; Women’s Meeting: Fridays, 7:30 pm

- **Job Search Circle** (JSC) meets in Atherton Hall on Wednesdays, 9-11am. $5/meeting. Dress code is business casual. For more info, go to www.jobsearchcircle.org or email JSC founder Rosemary Monahan, Rmonahan@jobsearchcircle.org.

- **Career Communicators** is a Toastmasters International Club dedicated to professional speaking. Meets in Atherton Hall the 1st & 3rd Tuesday of the month, 7-9 pm. More info: www.careercommunicators.com.

- **St Hubert Job Ministry** Events are non-denominational, free, open to all occupations, and held at various member churches. Upcoming event listings are posted on the Community bulletin board across from the church office or go to http://www.sainthubert.org/ministries/job.html
### Upcoming Church Meetings & Events: Dec into Jan

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sun</th>
<th>Mon</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Due 4</strong> Focus publication</td>
<td><strong>Due 5</strong> 10am Journaling Circle</td>
<td><strong>Due 6</strong> 7pm Carol Sing &amp; Crafts</td>
<td><strong>Due 7</strong> 9am CRS chapter meeting 10am Wellness House Hypnosis &amp; Reiki 7:30pm 4050s Game Night</td>
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<td>Dec 8 9 am Open Forum 10am Worship &amp; Relig.Educ. 11:15am Children’s Choir 11:30am Buddhist Study Grp 11:30am Green Sanctuary 6pm Emerging Young Adults</td>
<td>9 7pm Outreach Steering Council</td>
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<td>Dec 15 9 am Open Forum 10am All Church Christmas Pageant 11am Monthly Fair Trade Sale 11:15am Children’s Choir</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>17 10am Soul Connections Tues AM grp 7pm Soul Connections Tues PM grp</td>
<td>18 7pm Board of Trustees Mtg</td>
<td>19 10am Transitions 6pm Yoga 7:15pm Choir</td>
<td>20 7pm Soul Connections Fri grp</td>
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<td>23 10a-4p PADS Meal: deliver food items to Presby Church</td>
<td>24 4:30pm C’mas Eve Sunset Candelight Service</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>28 9:30am Feminine Divine Women’s Grp</td>
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<td>Dec 29 9 am Open Forum 10am Worship &amp; RE: 6th Sunday Faith in Action 11:15am Children’s Choir</td>
<td>Dec 30</td>
<td>Dec 31</td>
<td>Jan 1 Happy New Year</td>
<td>Jan 2 Focus deadline 10am Journaling Circle 6pm Yoga 7:15pm Choir</td>
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Our Covenant
We unite to strengthen the bonds of kinship among all persons, to promote human dignity, and to increase reverence for life’s creating, sustaining, and transforming power through worship, study, and service.

Our Mission
We are a spiritual community actively answering the call for love, compassion, reason, and justice.

Our Vision
Countryside is committed to being a voice of and active presence for liberal religion in the northwest suburbs. Empowered by our Mission Statement, we endeavor to:
• Create a welcoming place of connectedness, compassion, and respect for people of all ages. • Advance inclusivity and diversity within our congregation and community. • Care for each other in times of joy, sorrow, and transition. • Promote a sustainable future for our community and world by acting with a social, environmental, and global conscience. • Communicate and spread the message of Unitarian Universalism within and beyond our community. • Promote peace and justice in our congregation, communities, and the world. • Engage in thoughtful stewardship of our resources to achieve our mission and carry out our vision.

Upcoming Focus Deadlines
Submit all articles by 10 am to ccuu@ccuu.org
Jan 2 (publ. Jan 8) Jan 29 (publ. Feb 5) Feb 26 (publ. Mar 4)
Between Focus issues, written communication is via E-Updates & the Sunday Times insert to the Order of Worship. Deadline for e-updates & Sunday Times is Weds at 10 am.

Follow us on Facebook